

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for notifying callers, comprising the steps of:
assigning a first communications channel to a set of callers;
5 temporarily converting the first communications channel to a
second communications channel when the first communications channel is
released; and
transmitting a message to at least one of the set of callers over
the second communications channel.
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2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first
communications channel is converted to the second communications channel
for the shorter duration of a predetermined amount of time and a time until
the first communications channel is no longer released.
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3. The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of
selectively converting the second communications channel back to the first
communications channel.
- 20 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the message is a
notification that a party is attempting to contact at least one of the set of
callers.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the message includes information that reveals the identity of the party attempting to contact at least one of the set of callers.

5 6. The method according to claim 4, further comprising the steps of:
terminating the first communications channel after one of the set of callers receives the transmitted message; and
assigning a third communications channel to permit at least one
10 of the set of callers to contact the party.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first communications channel is a traffic channel and the second communications channel is a temporary control channel, both the traffic channel and the
15 temporary control channel being employed in a trunked dispatch service.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the set of callers use communications units assigned to the first communications channel to communicate with one another and wherein the first communications channel
20 is released when none of the communications units that are assigned to the first communications channel are transmitting over the first communications channel.

9. A method of notifying callers, comprising the steps of:
- assigning a first communications channel to a set of callers;
 - temporarily converting the first communications channel to a
 - 5 second communications channel when the first communications channel is released; and
 - transmitting over the second communications channel to at least one of the set of callers a notification that a party is attempting to contact at least one of the set of callers;
 - 10 wherein the first communications channel and the second communications channel are employed in a trunked dispatch service.

10. A system for notifying callers, comprising:
at least one base station; and
an application processor, wherein said application processor
5 assigns a first communications channel to a set of callers and instructs said
base station to temporarily convert said first communications channel to a
second communications channel when said first communications channel is
released;
wherein said application processor generates a message and
10 instructs said base station to transmit said message to at least one of the set
of callers over said second communications channel.

11. The system according to claim 10, wherein said application
processor instructs said base station to convert said first communications
15 channel to said second communications channel for the shorter duration of a
predetermined amount of time and a time until said first communications
channel is no longer released.

12. The system according to claim 11, wherein application
20 processor instructs said base station to selectively convert said second
communications channel back to said first communications channel.

13. The system according to claim 10, wherein said message is a notification that a party is attempting to contact at least one of the set of callers.

5 14. The system according to claim 13, wherein said message includes information that reveals the identity of the party attempting to contact at least one of the set of callers.

15 15. The system according to claim 13, wherein said application
10 processor terminates said first communications channel after one of the set of callers receives said transmitted message and assigns a third communications channel to permit at least one of the set of callers to contact the party.

15 16. The system according to claim 10, wherein said first communications channel is a traffic channel and said second communications channel is a temporary control channel, both said traffic channel and said temporary control channel being employed in a trunked dispatch service.

17. The system according to claim 10, further comprising at least one communications unit assigned to said first communications channel, wherein the set of callers use said communications units to communicate with one another and wherein said first communications channel is released when
- 5 none of said communications units that are assigned to said first communications channel are transmitting over said first communications channel.